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Nobel Peace Prize goes to Venezuelan leader Machado, who dedicates it to US President

THANK GOD IT'S NOT TRUMP!

Humbled, grateful

"This is something that the Venezuelan people deserve," Machado said in a call with the Nobel Institute. 'I am just part of a huge movement... I'm humbled, I'm grateful and I'm honoured."

AGENCIES

THERE was a collective sigh of relief across the world after the Norwegian Nobel committee awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado, passing over US President Donald Trump in the process.

Months of badgering by Trump for the most coveted award came to nought despite loads of nominations in his favour. He knew he had little chance of making it, as most of those nominations came after the February 1 deadline for this year's award, yet he went on bullying the Nobel committee like a spoilt child. That the panel showed spine to fob him off came like a breath of fresh air.

After the announcement, he went into a sulk, despite Machado dedicating the award to Trump. "Today, more than ever we count on President Trump, the people of the United States, the peoples of Latin America, and the democratic nations of the world as our main allies to achieve freedom and democracy," she said.

Her opposition to Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro aligns with the Trump administration's stance. Secretary of State Marco Rubio had previously praised her as 'the personification of resilience, tenacity, and patriotism'.

The first nation to face Trump's anger was China, as he said he no longer felt it necessary to meet President Xi Jinping at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit later this month. He lit into China's hostile trade practices, including new export controls on rare earths, and threatened it with massive tariff hikes.

Democracy activist Machado who sought to challenge President Maduro in last year's elections, has become a "unifying" figure in Venezuela, the Nobel jury said. "In the past year, Ms Machado has been forced to live in hiding," said Jorgen Watne Frydnes, chair of the Nobel committee. "Despite serious threats against her life, she has remained in the country, a choice that has inspired millions. When authoritarians seize power, it is crucial to recognise courageous defenders of freedom who rise and resist."

Machado was set to run against Maduro in last year's presidential election, but the government disqualified her. She then campaigned for her stand-in, ex-diplomat Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, seen by much of the international community as the rightful winner. The run-up to the election saw widespread repression, including disqualifications, arrests and human rights violations to 'steal' the mandate.

It's not for me to judge whether the current US president deserves the Nobel prize — I don't know. He's really doing a lot to resolve these complex crises, which have lasted for years, even decades

Vladimir Putin, Russian President

It should... remind those of us lucky enough to live in America that we have a solemn responsibility to constantly preserve and defend our own hard-won democratic traditions

Barack Obama, former US President

Democracy is a precondition for peace. However, we live in a world where democracy is in retreat

Nobel Peace Prize jury

Nobel laureates Abhijit Banerjee, Duflo to leave US

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE @Geneva

US-based Nobel laureates Esther Duflo and Abhijit Banerjee will soon join the University of Zurich, where they will establish a new centre for development economics, the institution said Friday.

The University of Zurich (UZH) said the married couple, who won the 2019 Economics Nobel alongside Michael Kremer, and currently work at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), would join its economics faculty from July next year. They will be moving to Switzerland at a time when experts have warned that US President Donald Trump's cuts to research funding and attacks on academic freedoms could lead to a brain drain.

Priyank: Govt not taking right decisions on city woes

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IT-BT Minister Priyank Kharge on Friday said more than traffic, urban planning is a major challenge in Bengaluru and the state government is not taking right decisions as it does not have enough urban planners.

The government's approach to urban planning is "knee-jerk", while it should instead be taking right decisions and forming long-term planning solutions, he said.

The state has not built the urban planning skill talent pool and a change in policy is needed. "People should be empathetic towards the government and say what is required, set short and medium-term goals and long-term milestones, instead of using hashtags to point at mistakes," he added.

Speaking at a day-long Mobility Symposium-2025, organised by MoveInSync, he said, "While other countries have ministries for AI, we need a ministry for common sense. There is a need for better urban planning as Bengaluru needs to deliver and grow better." P2

CM chairs 1st GBA meet

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday chaired the maiden Greater Bengaluru Authority meeting at its head office, and directed officials to ensure better coordination between parastatal agencies | P2

India upgrades its technical mission in Kabul to embassy

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

IN a recalibrated diplomatic strategy, India has officially upgraded its Technical Mission in Kabul to a full-fledged Embassy, the clearest sign yet of New Delhi's intent to deepen engagement with Afghanistan under Taliban rule.

The announcement was made at External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's meeting in New Delhi with Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on Friday, where the two leaders held wide-ranging discussions spanning security cooperation, infrastructure, humanitarian aid, education, trade, and people-to-people ties.

S Jaishankar with Afghani counterpart Amir Khan Muttaqi in New Delhi | PTI

Muttaqi used the occasion to publicly reassure India on one of its core concerns: terrorism emanating from Afghan soil. "We had a detailed discussion on security cooperation. We will not allow Afghan territory to be used against any country," he said. He further urged restraint over cross-border tensions, cautioning that "issues cannot be solved through this approach" and referencing Afghanistan's historical resistance to foreign aggression. "The Afghan people's patience and courage should not be challenged. If someone doesn't know, they should ask the British, Soviets, or Americans."

In response, Jaishankar acknowledged Kabul's assurances and said that India and Afghanistan shared a common goal peace, prosperity, and regional stability. "We appreciate your sensitivity towards India's security concerns. Your solidarity with us in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terrorist attack was noteworthy," he said.

EXPRESS READ

Tata Trusts board meet cordial amid listing call

Mumbai: The board of Tata Trusts, recently hit by an unprecedented revolt from four trustees led by Mehli Mistry — a close friend of the late Ratan Tata — against chairman Noel Tata, held a 'cordial' meeting on Friday. It discussed only routine charity matters, even as the government urged the warring sides to resolve their differences quickly | P16

NITI Aayog proposes tax enforcement overhaul

New Delhi: NITI Aayog has proposed a major overhaul of India's income tax enforcement framework, and recommended decriminalisation of 12 offences under the Income Tax Act, 2025, that are administrative or procedural in nature. Instead of criminal prosecution, it suggested imposing civil or monetary penalties for such defaults | P16

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